CORPS'PONDENT

US Army Corps of Engineers
Portland District

Vol. 33, No. 3 May - June 2009

INSIDE **THIS ISSUE:**

Col. Steven R. Miles and Jim Mahar review fish passage routes at Bonneville Dam with Afghan Deputy Minister Shojauddin Ziare. Photo by Amy Echols, Public Affairs Office

COMMANDER'S COLUMN

Forging success with stakeholder support

Col. Steven R. Miles, P.E.

As I write this, it's been about a week since Deputy District Engineer Kevin Brice and I returned from visiting our Congressional delegation in Washington, D.C. Those visits, plus other comments we've been hearing from city, county and state officials, made me want to share what our stakeholders think about the Portland District.

The first thing you ought to know is that almost everyone we talk to says "Let your folks know how much we appreciate them."

Our stakeholders know that we work hard and do our best to execute some very challenging missions. They are generally pleased with how well we do our jobs, and how quickly we react to emergencies and changing priorities. We don't get stuck in "analysis paralysis" – we execute the missions Congress asks us to do.

They also think that we do a pretty good job of maintaining relationships with them. They think we try hard to make our planning and decision-making as transparent and collaborative as possible, and to keep them informed about what we're trying to accomplish.

That may come as a surprise to some of you, since it seems like all we ever see or hear in the news media is what we've done wrong or who we failed to include. However, some of our biggest supporters are the key community, government and opinion leaders who really understand what's going on.

Our stakeholders also think that we are a good value. They know that we deliver quality services at a fair price, and provide tangible benefits to the region's infrastructure, economy and environment – benefits that often extend well beyond the duration and geographic boundaries of our specific projects.

Finally, though, our stakeholders do have one caution for us: Although we've done great things for them in the past and they expect us to continue to do so, we can't rest on our laurels.

Between the stimulus funding and our regular budget allocations, we have lots of urgent work to do – work that our local communities need, sometimes desperately. They're counting on us to get it done.

So let's stay focused on execution, and keeping our stakeholders well informed and an integral part of the team. Thanks for all you do everyday to make this District the success it is.

Building STRONG - Essayons!

Corrections

- We misspelled Diana Fredlund's name on the cover of the March-April issue.
- We attributed the Engineer Day photos in the March-April issue to the wrong person. Billie Johnson from ACE-IT Visual Information took those photos.
- We attributed The Oregon Ball story and photo in the March-April issue to the wrong person. Robin Norris from Bonneville Lock and Dam wrote the story, and her husband Jeff Norris took the photo.

We sincerely regret these errors, and are always looking to improve. If you see an error in this issue, please let editor Scott Clemans know about it by calling (503) 808-4513 or e-mailing scott.f.clemans@usace.army.mil.

Capps assumes deputy commander duties

By Scott Clemans, Public Affairs Office

Lt. Col. Steve Capps assumed the duties of deputy District commander May 5.

The son of a career Army warrant officer, Capps enlisted in the infantry in 1984 and received his U.S. Army commission in 1989. He has served in leadership and staff positions in Germany, North Africa, Southwest Asia, Korea and throughout the United States.

Prior to joining Portland District, he served as the assistant director of civil works for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Washington, D.C.

"I'm excited to become part of the Portland District team because of the broad scope of missions we do here. Salmon recovery, power generation, two critical dredges – we really represent all of USACE's civil works operations," Capps said.

Capps started his career in Germany, assuming increasing responsibilities in various platoon leader and staff positions.

Following an assignment with the United Nations Observer Force in the Western Sahara, Capps served as a company commander in the 864th and 249th (Prime Power) Engineer battalions and as a project engineer with the Corps' Far East District at Camp Casey, Korea.

He served as director of public works for the U.S. Army Garrison in Heidelberg, Germany, from 2003 to 2005, and as chief of facilities for Multi-National Corps – Iraq from 2005 to 2006.

Capps holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the United States Military Academy at West Point and a Master of Science degree in civil engineering from Louisiana State University. His military education includes the engineer officer's basic and advance courses and the U.S. Army Command and General Staff Course.

His military awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, five Meritorious Service medals, Joint Service Commendation Medal, four Army Commendation medals and the Airborne and Air Assault badges.

Capps is glad to be back in the Pacific Northwest. His wife, Melissa, is originally from Seattle, and he enjoys camping and is looking forward to getting back into fishing.

"This corner of the United States is a real treasure. The geography, the atmosphere, and more importantly, the great people make this an outstanding place to serve," he said.

Capps and his wife have two daughters, Madeline, 8, and Anna, 5.

DEPUTY'S WELCOME

Corps'pondent is an authorized unofficial newsletter for Department of Defense employees and retirees. Editorial content is the responsibility of the Public Affairs Office, Portland District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, P.O. Box 2946, Portland, OR 97208. Contents herein are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or the Department of the Army. Layout and printing by USACE Enterprise Information Technology Services. Circulation 900. Contributions and suggestions are welcome by mail, phone at (503) 808-4510 or email to CENWP-PA@usace.army.mil. Check out Corps'pondent online at *https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/pa/cp/home.asp.*

Commander: Col. Steven R. Miles, P.E.
Chief, Public Affairs: Matt Rabe
Editor: Scott Clemans

Division, District host Afghan minister's water management tour

Story and photos by Amy Echols, Public Affairs Office

Jim Mahar points out features of Bonneville Dam's second powerhouse.

Northwestern Division employees of all professions support the rebuilding of Afghanistan, a country of arid valleys and snowy mountains. They deploy to help develop that nation's infrastructure for hydropower generation, irrigation, floodwater storage and a reliable water supply.

The Division and Portland District, set in a flourishing agricultural region flush with hydropower and water resources, hosted the deputy minister of energy and water for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan over four days in April, sharing the history, challenges and benefits of developing an integrated watershed management system.

Dr. Shojauddin Ziaie's tour began with briefings in Washington, D.C., on several broad areas, including watershed management; planning, prioritization and funding of civil works projects; and conflict management.

Deputy Division Commander Col. Miroslav Kurka introduced Ziaie to the Corps' military construction, civil works and environmental missions. Division and District staff and leadership provided an overview of specific activities in the Willamette and Columbia river basins.

While Afghanistan's topography and water issues are more similar to Phoenix or Los Angeles, a Portland-area tour demonstrated the Division's and District's substantial experience in water management and flood mitigation.

Afghanistan faces issues of sedimentation in its rivers and streams, so Ziaie toured Mount St. Helens and the Corps' Sediment Retention Structure with Deputy District Commander Lt. Col. Jose Aguilar.

Dr. Azad Mohammadi, a Portland-area resident and senior water advisor for the U.S. Agency for International Development, served as Ziaie's advisor and interpreter. USAID is the government agency providing U.S. economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide.

District Commander Col. Steven R. Miles provided an overview of the District's mission, key programs and the stakeholder collaboration that drives much of the District's work.

Roger Kline, Willamette Valley Project operations superintendent, Erik Petersen, Shojauddin Ziaie, Col. Steven R. Miles, Azad Mohammadi and Dave Bardy, Willamette Valley Project maintenance superintendent, outside the Lookout Point powerhouse.

Bob Buchholz, District Hydraulics and Hydrology Branch chief, explained the integrated planning and scheduling process behind water releases from the projects in the Willamette and Rogue river basins and the Willow Creek project, and the monitoring and coordination of the lower three Columbia River lock and dam projects.

On the third day of his local itinerary, Ziaie boarded a helicopter with Miles and Erik Petersen, Willamette Valley Project operations manager, for a tour of the Willamette Basin and Bonneville Dam. From the air, Miles and Petersen reviewed the topography and development history of the basin and the Corps' watershed approach to reducing flood damage while balancing multiple uses.

Roger Kline and Dave Bardy (right) explain rule curve records from the 1996 Willamette Basin flood to Shojauddin Ziaie.

The deputy minister toured the Lookout Point Dam control room for an overview of issues facing operating facilities, including remote operation and security. Willamette Valley Project technical staff added points on information systems, forecasting and communication.

Bonneville Lock and Dam Project Operations Manager Jim Mahar led Ziaie on a tour of Bonneville's fish passage facilities for a look at the infrastructure that supports a complex natural resource conservation program.

Ziaie's questions over the course of his visit revealed much about the challenges ahead for Afghanistan, especially the seemingly incongruous responsibilities of protecting and conserving natural resources while providing the most basic of services like clean drinking water and reliable power.

Roger Kline, Erik Petersen, Shojauddin Ziaie, Azad Mohammadi, Col. Steven R. Miles and Dave Bardy review the control screens at the Lookout Point Dam powerhouse.

Ziaie thanked the Corps for supporting Afghanistan. He knows the country is starting with next to nothing - strategically, operationally and financially. Ziaie also commented that his country's future lies not in defining problems and developing solutions on their own, but among a community of countries.

ACE is looking for a few good volunteers

By Erica Jensen, Public Affairs Office

Current ACE members include (bottom row, left to right) Jim Arthur, Ramona Tillery, Barbara Boyd, Louis Landre, (top row, left to right) Brenda Jones, Leslie Conklin, Sheila Weber, Michelle Rhodes and John Nicholson. Not pictured: Stephanie Baird and Kathy Seitz. Photo by Billie Johnson, ACE-IT Visual Information.

Many employees in the Robert Duncan Plaza are regular attendees of Portland District holiday brunches, fiscal year-end pie eating celebrations, chili-dog feeds and candy and bake sales. Every year they also may buy discounted movie tickets or Entertainment books. All of these activities are provided by ACE.

ACE stands for Action Committee for Employees and is a volunteer organization that helps Corps of Engineer employees located in RDP, during their times of happiness or times of distress. They hold fundraisers throughout the year to finance cards, flowers, in-memory contributions, or cakes for "hail and farewell" celebrations.

"Last year ACE supported more than one hundred families," said John Nicholson, ACE's new chairman. "Employees or supervisors should contact us if they know about an employee that needs our help."

ACE is comprised of a group of dedicated Corps employees who have taken on extra volunteer responsibilities, while also performing their regular job duties.

Many have been members for years, including Stefanie Baird, Hydroelectric Design Branch, whose face is one you see at most ACE events.

"Participating in ACE is one of the most rewarding volunteer positions that I have held," said Baird. "It's a great way to meet your co-workers while giving back to the Corps family."

ACE's bylaws say it should have a minimum of 15 volunteers who are also Corps employees within the Robert Duncan Plaza. Because of this, ACE is looking for a few good volunteers to raise their hands and join the ranks as members.

"We need some new volunteers with lots of energy and fresh, new ideas that will appeal to everyone," says Nicholson. "We've recently lost five ACE members through retirements and reassignments. Only 10 members remain and those numbers are dwindling as more volunteers are planning their own life changes."

Your new responsibilities won't be that hard or even that time-consuming – and some activities actively will even be fun.

As a new ACE member, you'll be required to attend quarterly planning meetings and help at fundraising events, holiday brunches and District town halls.

You may volunteer for service at any time, at any ACE-sponsored event just by talking to one of the ACE members on hand. "So, give it some thought and consider volunteering as an ACE member," Nicholson said.

Volunteers work "Down by the Riverside" at Bonneville and Valley projects

Story and photos by Claudia Round, Bonneville Lock & Dam, and Christie Johnson, Willamette Valley Project

Portland District's operating projects worked with local volunteers on restoration and beautification efforts as part of Oregon 150's "Take Care of Oregon Days" and the 14th annual SOLV Down By The Riverside Program.

Five volunteers participated in a riverside restoration project May 16 at the Robins Island Recreation Area at Bonneville Dam, helping to plant fifty native shrubs and trees. The shrubs and trees will provide cover and a food source for wildlife, especially birds.

Volunteers also added weed prevention cloth, mulch and protective screen for each shrub.

The plants were obtained through a grant from SOLV, a non-profit organization that brings together government agencies, businesses and individual volunteers in programs and projects to enhance the livability of Oregon.

Natural Resource Specialist Sandra Cannon and Park Ranger Christie Johnson worked with 32 Lundy Elementary students May 15 to remove invasive ivy from the Dexter Lake shoreline.

Corps Park Ranger Travis Chewning along with 20 volunteers for Linn County Parks coordinated a successful clean-up of Foster Lake May 16, cleaning up trash and removing non-native ivy from the lake's shoreline. Many of the participants used boats to gain access to remote areas of the lake.

More than 20,000 volunteers across Oregon celebrated the state's 150th birthday by rolling up their sleeves and pitching in to make their state a cleaner and greener place.

Corps finds there's no small potatoes in a flood fight

By Diana Fredlund, Public Affairs Office

When it comes to protecting residents from rising flood waters, Corps engineers use every tool available to them, including potatoes.

Not long after the Red River of the North crested March 29 at 40.82 feet, the National Weather Service posted a severe weather warning for Fargo, N.D., and Moorhead, Minn., calling for wind gusts up to 45 mph and upwards of 14 inches of snow.

Residents and city officials may have breathed a sigh of relief when the river crested with limited damage to local homes, but U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flood fighters knew that blizzard-force winds were a danger to levees still working hard to hold back more than 30 feet of flood waters.

"We don't usually worry too much about wave action on rivers, because they're not often wide enough to generate many waves," said Tim Bertschi, area engineer for the St. Paul District's Fargo office. "Strong winds can push the water even in a narrow river, creating waves that could damage the levees."

In order to protect the levees in places where the winds would blow directly against the river side, engineers decided to lay rolls of polyethylene, which is already used to control seepage, help protect from saturation and hold the levee's shape.

Potatoes are used as weights to hold the sandbag and plastic in place.

Potatoes, rope, plastic and sandbag are used for levee protection.

"We believed the poly would limit the damage from wave action by keeping the waves from directly hitting the levee," Bertschi said.

With the water still high against the levees, engineers knew they had to anchor the poly with sandbags, but how to attach the sandbags without damaging the poly?

"We couldn't poke holes in the poly to tie off the sandbags, because that would create a weakness the river would find right away and tear through," said Drew Savage, a quality assurance representative from St. Paul District who, when not fighting floods, works in project management.

That's when potatoes, one of North Dakota's major crops, joined the flood fight.

"We knew other districts had used poly like this before, but there wasn't time to call around and ask how they'd done it," Savage said. "That's when I suggested knotting the poly around potatoes. They were the right size and we knew you can find them at any grocery store."

Farmers in North Dakota and Minnesota grow more than 4 billion pounds of potatoes per year, so finding around 100 bags of home-grown spuds was easy.

"At first someone suggested using tennis balls, but they're expensive," said Alex Nelson, a St. Paul District civil engineer with the Hydraulics and Hydrology section. "We got the potatoes and practiced knotting them into the poly a few times, then showed the National Guard Soldiers how to do it."

The poly was wrapped around each potato near the end of the sheet and a rope attached to a sandbag was tied around the potato, providing an anchor the river couldn't tear through, Nelson said.

The North Dakota National Guard had deployed their Soldiers to aid in the flood fight, and throughout the first crest they'd had the primary responsibility for monitoring the levees for leaks.

"They were pretty tickled about tying potatoes, but we found the idea worked really well," Nelson said.

After the first sheet was prepared, the National Guard unfurled the poly, complete with potatoes and sandbags, over the river side of the levee, which settled easily into place. The sandbags kept the sheets of poly directly against the levees.

"It was an on-the-fly, low-tech solution that worked very well," Bertschi said. "We were able to deploy the poly to all the areas we were concerned about before the storm hit."

The spirit of cooperation in Red River Valley communities has been well documented – a spirit that helped the residents fight this record-breaking flood.

Now there's one more member to include in that cooperative team – one that proves in flood fighting, no tool is small potatoes.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and North Dakota Army National Guard members install plastic sheeting over sand and sandbag levees in preparation for a blizzard in Fargo, N.D., March 30.

Corps of Engineers Photos

District headquarters welc

Story by Scott Clemans, Public Affairs Office, and Sophia Coats-Clemans, Columbia Valley Elementary School

Photos by Billie Johnson, ACE-IT Visual Information

Portland District headquarters welcomed about 30 employees' children and grandchildren to Robert Duncan Plaza April 23 for Take Your Children to Work Day.

Kevin Brice, deputy District engineer for project management, kicked off the day with an assembly for all the kids and grownups. He explained the different missions that the District performed, and stressed the team concept – lots of people doing different jobs to achieve a common goal.

Bobber the Water Safety Dog also made an appearance, handing out bags of educational activities and posing for photos with the kids.

Brice challenged the kids to learn the answer to the question, "What does your mom or dad do when he or she comes to work?" by the end of the day. The kids fanned out to their parents' and grandparents' work stations after the assembly to do just that.

Nicole Webster, granddaughter of paralegal specialist and FOIA officer Janice Sorensen, said that she and her sister Neely learned that her grandmother "takes photos and investigates accidents" for the Office of Counsel.

Conner Davis, son of Hydraulics and Hydrology Branch administrative technician Shawn Davis, said that his dad "pays people, and he helps the boss."

Some employees created special tasks for their kids to accomplish, or had them help with their regular duties.

comes employees' children

Davis, for example, said, "I'm going to teach (Conner) how to use the copy machine."

Training and organizational development specialist Jennifer Cannard asked her daughter Sydney Folwell to create a mural of employee training opportunities to hang in the hallway.

The kids also learned more about the district's missions and achievements from their parents and grandparents.

"(I learned) what people do in this building and how they help the environment," said Neely Webster.

Lauren Benoit, daughter of district dive coordinator and dive safety officer Rick Benoit, said, "I learned about diving and how people work as a team."

The benefits of the day, however, extended well beyond education.

Ryan Horiuchi, son of electrical engineer Eileen Horiuchi and grandson of budget analyst Consuelo Rodriguez in the Engineering and Construction Division, said that he attended Take Your Child to Work Day "because I wanted to spend time with my mom and grandma."

Son of former park manager visits dad's memorials

Story by Scott Clemans, Public Affairs Office

Photos by Kelly Thomas, The Dalles Lock and Dam Project

When an Army National Guard soldier came to The Dalles Lock and Dam Project to get his common access card reset before deploying overseas, Park Ranger Kelly Thomas discovered he was Sgt. Albert South, the son of former Park Manager Larry South.

The project's work boat and a tree in the memorial park are both named for Larry South, who was killed in an automobile accident near Bickleton, Wash., in December 2000.

Albert South had just returned to The Dalles from Texas, where his mother and family presently live. He had never seen the boat or tree dedicated to his father, so Thomas had the pleasure of showing him for the first time.

Mark Eddings, now chief recreation park ranger at the Little Rock District's Mountain Home Project Office, succeeded Larry South as park manager at The Dalles/John Day/Willow Creek Project.

"Larry was a special person who touched many lives on both a personal and professional level," Eddings said. "He was responsible for much of what is now enjoyed in the natural resources programs at The Dalles and John Day in terms of infrastructure, equipment, and policy."

Eddings said that Larry South's greatest contributions were his clear vision for improved and inclusive recreational opportunities; his concept of shared use of several treaty fishing sites; improved tribal relations; development of LePage Park; innovative use of surplused equipment; development of a vibrant volunteer program; and the personal good will and support that he showed his staff and all with whom he worked.

Beyond his work contributions, Eddings said, Larry South was also a member of the National Guard, a deacon and lay pastor at his church, and was active in Audubon and other Natural Resource causes. He and his wife also raised as many as 10 foster kids over the years in addition to their three birth children.

"Larry was a great leader and supervisor. He was an even better friend and person," Eddings concluded.

Ivan Oakes Campground provides seclusion, recreation

Story and photo by Christie Johnson, Willamette Valley Project

If you are looking for a quiet, secluded place to camp this summer within an hour or two of Oregon's metropolitan areas, consider visiting Ivan Oakes Campground on the north shore of Lookout Point Reservoir in the Willamette Valley.

The Eugene-Pacific Crest Trail passes through the campground and provides miles of hiking and mountain-biking opportunities along the reservoir. Boating, fishing and water-skiing are also popular activities. Signal Point Boat Ramp is about a mile from the campground for boat launching.

Campers enjoy their shady, lakeside campsite at Ivan Oaks Campground over Memorial Day Weekend.

The campground is about six miles east of Lookout Point Dam on West Boundary/North Shore Road near Lowell, Ore. Each of the 24 sites includes a graveled parking pad, picnic table and fire ring. Drinking water and vault toilets are available nearby.

Camping fees are $10 per night. One additional vehicle is permitted for $5 per night if it fits within the campsite parking pad. No other parking is available.

For more information about Corps recreation areas in the Willamette Valley, visit *https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/op/V/home.asp* or call (541) 942-5631.

Spearfish Lake hosts opening trout fishing weekend

By Jake Firle, The Dalles Lock and Dam

Spearfish Lake, managed by The Dalles Lock and Dam Project on the Washington shore of the Columbia River, has a tradition for being one of the most sought-after trout fishing locations in southern Washington, and this year's trout opener on the weekend of April 25 proved no exception.

Hundreds of anglers from as far away as Yakima and Seattle packed Spearfish Park in hopes of catching some of the more than 9,000 catchable rainbow trout stocked in the lake.

An angler shows off his catch at Spearfish Lake park.

The trout are raised at Goldendale Fish Hatchery and stocked periodically into the lake in January and throughout the months of April through June, providing anglers with constant action throughout the fishing season.

Spearfish Park is located near Dallesport, Wash., off Dock Road approximately one mile east of U.S. Highway 197. *Visit http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/op/d/parksnrec.asp* or call the park ranger office at (541) 506-7819.

Sediment Evaluation Framework
regionalizes, streamlines review process

By Jennifer Sowell, Public Affairs Office

Obtaining a dredging permit can be a daunting task. It requires a technical review of multiple project elements by several state and federal agencies, as well as the public.

One very small but critical component of this review process involves characterizing the sediment in the dredge area to evaluate its suitability for in-water disposal. It is one factor for which all the permitting agencies need the same information, and now there is a much more efficient means to get sediment sampling data to them.

The Sediment Evaluation Framework is an interagency document that lays out a consistent, regional process for sediment management in the Portland, Seattle and Walla Walla districts.

The SEF outlines procedures to evaluate site contamination risk, and carry out sediment sampling and analysis that meet the regulatory requirements of federal and state permitting agencies.

It also considers the suitability of the area exposed after dredging. If the material left behind is more contaminated than what was removed and exceeds the screening levels contained in the SEF, then the applicant must manage for that exposure.

These are two types of sediment sampling tools - a sediment corer and a surface sediment grab sampler, respectively. They are used to obtain samples for characterization of the material in the dredge area. Photos by Anchor QEA.

To implement the SEF guidance, each district has its own interagency review team. In Portland and Walla Walla districts this team is known as the Project Review Group; in Seattle District it is the Dredged Material Management Program.

A representative from each agency – the Corps, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington Department of Ecology, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – sits on the Portland District PRG that evaluates the sediment information provided by applicants.

"The PRG streamlines the review process, giving applicants a one-stop shop for review of their project," said Eric Braun, Northwestern Division senior navigation program manager.

In the past, a project proponent would have contacted each of these agencies individually, and the review process could be long, unpredictable and frustrating, as agencies often gave conflicting guidance and took up to a year to make recommendations.

The Portland District dredge Yaquina *heads for an offshore disposal site after dredging a load of material from a shallow coastal entrance. Photo by Bob Heims.*

"Since all of the agencies are involved as part of the PRG, permit applicants can get a consensus on these decisions all at once, rather than in a piecemeal fashion," said James McMillan, Portland District regulatory project manager. "That is the benefit of utilizing the SEF guidance and coordinating with the PRG."

"The process is collaborative, allowing for more timely decisions," said Marci Cook, Portland District environmental protection specialist. "The PRG facilitates good communication and cooperation between the regulatory agencies in order to support the permit process."

The PRG does not conduct its reviews and subsequent recommendations in a vacuum. The review process is deliberately open and transparent, providing applicants a seat at the table alongside the PRG.

"Project applicants are involved with the project review group, which allows them to see how the process is applied to their project and the reasoning behind decisions that are made," said Cook.

The SEF and PRG also ensure that the process is consistent. Sediment evaluation and recommendations are the same for a permit applicant as they are for a Corps project manager.

"This levels the playing field since all projects – even Corps projects – are treated the same," said Stephanie Stirling, Seattle District biologist.

While the SEF contains technical information regarding sampling protocols, threshold toxicity levels for chemicals of concern, and biological testing, the framework is intended to be a useful, relevant document to the public.

"The SEF was written so that mom-and-pop operations could use it without having to hire a consultant to get through the process," said Cook.

The SEF will be revised annually. Updates to the SEF were recently finalized after holding a round of public meetings and gathering public comments. The current version of the SEF and all the comments received on the draft are available at *http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/pm/e/rset.asp.*

"This public involvement, both in updating and implementing the SEF, builds trust and confidence in the process and the agencies responsible for reviewing projects," said Cook.

The SEF has its roots in Seattle District's long-running Puget Sound Dredged Disposal Analysis program. The PSDDA program evolved and was set up for other specific locations, such as the Washington coast and the lower Columbia River.

While it was a good start, the process for each location varied in its procedures and implementation, and the documents guiding the processes were not updated often.

The SEF takes all the best aspects of the prior sediment management programs and provides a comprehensive, regional approach. While its use is not mandatory, it is highly recommended at the outset of a proposed dredging project as it makes the process more efficient, transparent and collaborative.

Are we the last children of the outdoors?

A tribute to Uncle Phillip and camping trips at Lake Hope State Park

By Jason Sharp, Bonneville Lock and Dam

Editor's note: Remember all the fun you had as a kid? Last summer, the District asked you to share your stories about your childhood adventures in order to encourage others to get outdoors. As this summer's recreation season begins, we offer Jason's tale.

As a young boy, my family's favorite place to camp was Lake Hope State Park in the Wayne National Forest in southeastern Ohio – a rugged and mountainous area by Midwestern standards.

We camped at Lake Hope nearly every summer, often with extended family. Uncle Phillip, his wife and their four daughters were our most frequent camping companions.

I have fond memories of those times, including long hikes, fish catches and even searching for Bigfoot.

Now, there are some folks who might roll their eyes at the mention of Bigfoot, but they're missing the point. It's not that we hit the woods looking for Bigfoot, but that we did it together as a family.

My Bigfoot story occurred during the summer of 1978. It started when Uncle Phillip drove my mother, my aunt and us kids to the lake shore in my dad's old Ford truck. We loved this drive because we usually spotted all kinds of wildlife – deer, turkey, squirrels and rabbits – and Uncle Phillip always kept his eyes peeled for anything that moved.

After dropping us off at the beach, Uncle Phillip headed back to camp. On the way, he passed a road leading to some coal mines, an old schoolhouse and even a "haunted" railroad tunnel. But he also spotted something else that would forever change our family's view of Lake Hope.

As he looked up the road, he saw a large black animal standing upright and crossing the pavement.

Uncle Phillip tending the fire during a family camping trip.

After almost wrecking the truck, Uncle Phillip turned around and drove back to where the sighting occurred. He scanned the hillsides, looking into the forest as far as he could see, but saw no tracks. There may have been some broken branches.

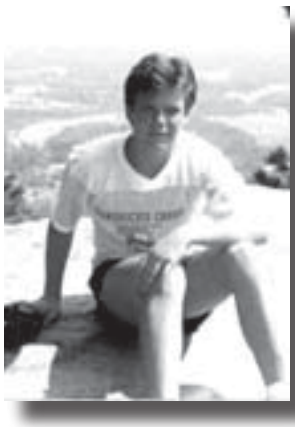
Uncle Phillip's story of the incident changed throughout the years – akin to a fisherman's catch growing larger as the tale is told. At any rate, Uncle Phillip was shaken by what he had seen.

The next day, our Bigfoot hunt began in earnest with all 11 of us piling into the truck and heading down that old road. The adults and older kids were

aware of what we were searching for, but my younger cousin Dana and I were kept in the dark so as not to scare us to death.

We hiked along railroad tracks, Raccoon Creek and the edges of blackened hillsides – the results of strip-mining for coal. We saw all the usual characters of the Lake Hope scene – deer, squirrels, turkeys, fish, snakes and even a beaver.

Our hunt yielded no proof of the legendary animal that day. My greatest memory is not about looking for Bigfoot, but rather the smell of sticky-pine railroad ties, the sight of deer leaping away as we trotted by, and the sound of bob-white quails calling throughout the woods.



A young Jason Sharp camping at Lake Hope State Park in Ohio.

I remember the bits of coal and unusually-colored rocks that Dana and I collected as treasures, and the musty smell of a railroad tunnel that dripped water into rusty puddles. I remember the memorable sounds of us kids singing songs along the trail, and picking wildflowers and blackberries.

And, of course, I remember patrolling the trail with Dana, with toy machine guns fashioned from fallen tree branches picked up along the way.

Bigfoot was nothing more than a footnote to our trip. The true story and my lasting memory was the time we spent together as a family in the woods, sharing what nature had to offer at a price that couldn't be beat – free.

My mother and Uncle Phillip have since passed away, but I will always have those memories of us together in the woods.

As we've grown older with our own friends and families, and our lives become even faster paced and dependent on electronic devices for entertainment, what stories will our children tell? Will they have memories of their loved ones in the woods that they can share with their own children someday?

Boone Sharp, Jason Sharp and Uncle Phillip with a copperhead snake.

You can buy fishing and hunting video games and hike virtual "trails" from the comfort of your own home. But will these electronic escapades provide you and your children with a memory to share of outdoor adventures and remembrances of your own family's favorite places to go?

Jason Sharp, Bonneville park ranger.

Environmental commitment floats Oregon's latest tern island

By Amy Echols, Public Affairs Office

Combine the enthusiasm of an environmental engineer and the challenging setting of a remote lake, add a few tons of recycled plastic and migrating Caspian terns, and voilá: A floating island to help save threatened and endangered salmon.

Spurred by her commitment to make a difference in the world, Kitia Chambers, an environmental engineer with Portland District's Design Branch, worked with Corps biologists and a cutting-edge recycling contractor to launch a 22,000 square-foot floating island.

Chambers is part of an avian predation team creating nesting habitat for Caspian terns to draw them away from islands in the Columbia River estuary, where they annually feast on over 4 million juvenile salmon listed under the Endangered Species Act.

The estuary islands formed over many years from the placement of Corps dredging material. The barren, sandy terrain, ideal for nesting, and the abundant supply of fish contributed to the creation of the world's largest tern colony and a negative impact on the population of juvenile salmon making their way to the Pacific Ocean.

The Corps identified Dutchy Lake in the remote Summer Lake Wildlife Area in south-central Oregon as a viable alternate location for tern nesting. However, the lake, filled with water year-round, presented some challenges to building an island in the same manner as three other projects.

"Terns historically nested in the area and we were confident we could lure them back during their northward spring migration, if only an island could be built," explained Chambers. "In other locations, we built roads to a site and constructed the conventional rock islands during the dry season. We couldn't lower the water levels at Dutchy, so building the same type of island was cost prohibitive and environmentally disruptive. Then the concept of a barge-like island came to mind."

Chambers conducted an Internet search on the subject, which lead her to Floating Island International in Shepherd, Mont.

"I researched the company's BioHaven floating islands, which were already in place as habitat enhancements around the country. Adding to the attraction was their use of recycled plastics and an environmentally sensitive design," Chambers said. "I just had to dig into this alternative."

Project managers were not initially sold on this alternative. However, after studying a prototype in Montana, negotiating the design details, and clearly understanding its cost effectiveness and environmental sustainability compared to islands made of new materials, the Corps decided to take the step.

The manufacturer developed and tested a prototype island in Montana. In-water assembly of the island components proved infeasible. Photo by Kitia Chambers, Design Branch

In a specialized factory in Montana, a crew of 13 built the 328 modules that make up the main part of the nearly oval island. Each module measured approximately 5 feet by 14 feet and used 200 pounds of polypropylene from recycled carpet and 125 pounds of polyester from recycled drinking bottles, which would otherwise occupy acres of landfill space.

Floating Island International trucked the modules in fourteen 53-foot containers to the site. The actual on-site assembly required minimal equipment, but the five-week window between the waterfowl hunting and bird migration seasons meant crews had to move fast once all the pieces arrived at the site.

Working through issues on a prototype island near the manufacturing facility in Montana gave the team the information necessary to design an efficient assembly and launch process. The Corps also met with the site construction contractor and the manufacturer at Dutchy Lake to plan the field assembly. This advance knowledge saved the Corps time and money.

Just Buckets Excavating of Salem, Ore., the Corps' construction contractor, built a unique shore-based launch ramp for an assembly-line type installation that mimicked a huge Lego project.

Crews assemble floating island modules on a specialized launch ramp at Dutchy Lake.
Photo by Kitia Chambers, Design Branch

A backhoe and crew spreads lightweight pumice as the terns' nesting material as floating island modules are set in place.
Photo by Kitia Chambers, Design Branch

In freezing temperatures, crews first connected several rows of the modules on the dry ramp. Next, they stapled green tree fabric over these rows to prevent plant growth, over which they spread a 7-inch layer of lightweight pumice as the terns' nesting material. Flagstones to help young terns get back on the island after being in the water rimmed the outside edges of the connected modules.

Crews slid the assembled portions down the ramp just far enough to get them floating, but kept one side exposed to connect to the next assemblage of modules. Finally, boats pulled the completed island – modules, pumice, flagstone and a decoy system floating together – to the middle of the icy lake. There it was anchored, awaiting its first occupants.

"Since the island was not built up from the lake bottom or require the construction of a causeway to bring the equipment to the site, we did not disrupt aquatic life in the lake and we can position the island anywhere we desire," explained Chambers.

"I made a commitment that my career would help make the world a better place. I think this is a fantastic project where we made a difference," she said.

The avian predation team's four tern islands, complete with decoys and ideal nesting material, are now in the middle of Crump Lake in south-central Oregon's Warner Valley, the Corps' Fern Ridge Reservoir in the Willamette Valley, and

Continued on page 20

Continued from page 19

East Link and Dutchy lakes in the Summer Lake Wildlife Area.

This new habitat is within the birds' historic range, and once colonies settle, they will enjoy a varied diet from more abundant and sustainable sources.

This fall, the Corps will start construction on a larger, 30,000 square-foot floating island at Sheepy Lake in northern California as part of the plan to build eight more islands. According to Chambers, it is possible that the Corps will consider floating islands at other locations where environmental and cost considerations lend themselves to this approach.

Last summer, shortly after completion, 428 pairs of nesting terns called the new Crump Lake island home. Caspian terns are now nesting on Dutchy Lake's floating island. Chambers and the team are excited to see the results of their efforts to build islands so the birds will come.

The island, complete with a social attraction decoys and patio speakers to broadcast bird calls, is ready for occupation. Photo by Dan Battaglia, Oregon State University

District managers conquer Boston Marathon

By Scott Clemans, Public Affairs Office

Jim Mahar, Bonneville Lock and Dam Project operations manager, and Erik Petersen, Regulatory Branch chief, returned to Portland District triumphant from the 113th Boston Marathon, which they ran April 20.

Mahar ran the 26.2-mile course in 2 hours, 56 minutes, 33 seconds, placing 25th in his age division and 923rd overall. According to the Vancouver, Wash., Columbian, Mahar was the first runner from Clark County to complete the race.

Petersen finished his first Boston Marathon in 3 hours, 28 minutes, 28 seconds, good for 947th place in his age division and 6,791st place overall – well within the top third of the 22,849 runners who finished the race.

Erik Petersen

Jim Mahar